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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6169  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 000134

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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WHA/CAR FOR MICHAEL FORTIN  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KCRM SOCI PGOV PHUM KJUS PREL XL VC  
SUBJECT: ST. VINCENT: MAN ACQUITTED OF KILLING PM'S PRESS  
SECRETARY

SIPDIS

REF: A. 06 BRIDGETOWN 554  
¶B. 06 BRIDGETOWN 425

¶1. (U) Summary: In a year of sensational crime stories, St. Vincent witnessed its most sensational trial fall apart this week, as the man accused with the 2006 murder of the Prime Minister's press secretary was acquitted of the charges. The presiding judge had earlier ruled that an oral confession had been inappropriately obtained, leading to the verdict. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On February 28, 2008 the accused, Francis Williams, was acquitted of all charges in the 2006 murder of Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves' former press secretary and personal aide, Glenn Jackson (Reftels). The prosecution's case, which had been investigated with help from Scotland Yard, was being argued by the Director of Public Prosecutions and Trinidadian lawyer Gilbert Peterson.

¶3. (U) High Court Judge Frederick Bruce-Lyle previously ruled that the prosecution could not include as evidence an oral confession received from Williams during the course of investigation. According to Bruce-Lyle, the manner in which the alleged confession was obtained breached several chapters of the nation's Police Act. The judge noted that the police officers in the investigation failed to properly record the confession, and lambasted the police for an "awful investigation."

¶4. (SBU) Comment: The abrupt end to the Glenn Jackson murder trial will no doubt leave most Vincentians further disenchanted with the country's police force and criminal system. It also highlights the police force's perceived lack of discipline. Considering the victim's crucial role in St. Vincent politics and the ruling ULP party's success, questions will linger as to the motives behind the killing.  
End Comment.

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